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DETECTIVE BRANCH OF THE POLICE SERVICE.

in 4. Of the 24 imbeciles examined, 15 were normal; 4 showed pallor or edema; 1, slight indistinctness of the disc and 1 well-marked atrophy. Of the 53 idiots examined, normal fundi were found in only 2, pallor and edema was found in 13 cases, general congestion in 1, general pallor in 8, optic atrophy 3, dilated veins in 1, choked disc, thrombosis of the central vein, retinal congestion, retinal hemorrhage in 1 each.

The conclusion of the investigators is that there is a well-marked neural as well as psychic degeneration in the great majority of all cases of idiocy. The research is submitted as a contribution to the clinico-pathologic study of degeneration.

F. G.

A NEW BERTILLON INVENTION.—It is announced that M. Bertillon, head of the identification department of the Prefecture of Police in Paris, who has contributed so much to the methods for apprehending and identifying criminals, has recently invented a new contrivance for the detection of persons who are accustomed to prey upon the unsuspecting public. It is a machine for measuring blows struck by burglars, whether on a door or on the head of a human being. It is described as consisting "of two dynamometers, which are placed at right angles, so that either the pressure or the horizontal traction can be measured. The method in vogue enables the measurer to transfer the power of the blow upon any other instrument or person that may be selected.

"The practical value of the invention lies in being able to determine positively in cases of men who have been arrested on suspicion only whether they could have dealt a certain kind of blow with a supposed weapon. This is considered as being of the greatest possible use to the police in detecting crime and in the solving what heretofore have almost been impossible problems to be dealt with. The thief and the thug will be the more readily detected with M. Bertillon's latest invention."

J. W. G.

THE DETECTIVE BRANCH OF THE POLICE SERVICE.—Daniel G. Slattery, secretary to former Police Commissioner Bingham of New York City, is the author of an article recently contributed to the *Boston Transcript*, dealing with the poor quality of the American detective force. In the first place, he says, the profession is too poorly paid. New York City pays its best detectives \$2,000 a year. No other city pays more, and the average is about \$1,000. The force is usually recruited from the ranks of laborers, and the wonder is that the results are as good as they are. Speaking of the "stool pigeon" (an informer who has no sense of moral responsibility and who will "peach on a pal as soon as he would on any other thief"), Mr. Slattery says:

"The 'stool pigeon' detective is a necessary evil and always will continue so. No detective force of any size could get along without 'stool pigeons,' unless the men who composed the force were all high-grade men with the mentality a first-grade detective ought to have. The ideal force would be one that was evenly made up of both kinds of detectives. The brainy sleuth then could do the reasoning and the analytical work that would be sure to produce results, and the 'stool pigeon' detective could keep on doing what he has been doing for many years. The class of men who are doing detective work in every city of any size would not amount to shucks—some of them don't as it is—unless they could get information from thieves. The thief who becomes an informer expects something in return and he gets it either in money or favors. The detective cannot afford to pay for this information out of his own pocket,

CODIFICATION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN ENGLAND.

but many of them do, and are never reimbursed by the city that employs them, for there is no provision in the law for spending the tax-payers' money this way. The result is that the average detective is prone to receive rewards on the sly when he ought to be above such a thing. The 'stool pigeon' mode of doing detective work will never be put on a proper basis until every city sets aside a fund to pay police informers.

"A 'stool pigeon' does not have to be a thief necessarily, but he generally is one. Dive-keepers and owners of resorts that thieves frequent make first-class 'stools.' Most any liquor dealer who does not observe the excise law strictly can be driven into the 'stool pigeon' class by the police making him obey the law while his competitors are allowed to disregard it. If he complains of police activity he can be easily induced to impart information to the police on the understanding that he will not be molested any more than his competitors. Such is the common way of turning an ordinarily decent saloon-keeper into a 'stool.' The dive-keeper is a willing informer, for he knows the easiest way to avoid trouble is to give the police the information they seek.

"There is no getting away from the value of 'stool pigeon' information. Whenever you read of a detective being around when a crime is being committed, you are safe in assuming that they are on hand because of a tip, and that it is 'stool pigeon' information that causes them to be on the job. This is invariably so where arrests of criminals are made while they are in the act of committing a robbery of any sort."

J. W. G.

PROPOSED CODIFICATION OF THE CRIMINAL LAW OF ENGLAND.—It is announced that the Lord Chancellor has introduced the first instalment of a scheme for codifying the whole criminal law of England. The work is to proceed by stages, the whole project to be brought forward in sections. The *London Times*, in commenting on the project, remarks that the advantages of codification are very much less exaggerated now than formerly. That there are manifest advantages, however, the *Times* readily admits. Thus it says:

"But it is surely justification enough of such a work that the majority of the indictable offenses in this country are dealt with by tribunals not composed of lawyers. The chairman may be, and the clerk always is, a lawyer, but the bulk of the Bench, who are not, may fairly claim that they shall have some authoritative statement of the law which they are called upon to apply. If further justification were needed, it is found in the fact that in the very process of codification criminal law is necessarily rationalized; absurdities and solecisms are almost automatically expelled. It is, too, a great opportunity for bringing the law into accord with public opinion, the best security for its being obeyed. Nor need we, on the other hand, take it for granted that codification means petrifaction or ossification of the law, which is one familiar objection. The experience of modern countries which have adopted codes is not to that effect. In these days the danger that there will be too little legislation, too great a tendency to respect what has once been enacted, is very small."

J. W. G.

PROPOSED INDETERMINATE SENTENCE LAW IN RHODE ISLAND.—At the recent session of the Rhode Island General Assembly a strong effort was made to secure the enactment of a law providing for the indeterminate sentence in the case of persons sentenced to the state prison for offenses other than murder, manslaughter, arson, burglary, robbery, and rape. The maximum term prescribed by the proposed law was not to be longer than the maximum term fixed